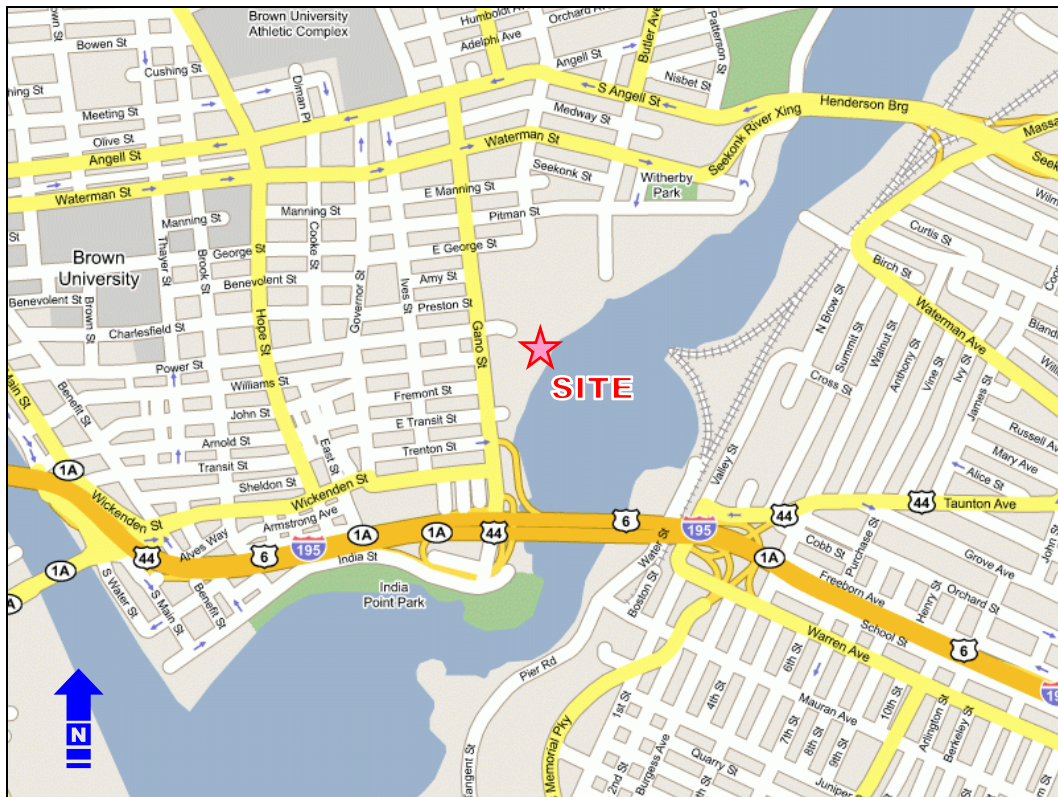


Site No. 2

GANO STREET RECREATION AREA

Providence
Gano Street



GANO STREET RECREATION AREA

Site Description

The Gano Street Recreation Area is a city-owned and maintained facility located at the intersection of Gano and Power Streets in the Fox Point / East Side neighborhood of Providence. Current uses of the recreation area are almost exclusively sports-related, as the site hosts three athletic fields (soccer, softball, little league baseball) and a basketball court. The shoreline feature along the Seekonk River is characterized by steep banks which drop approximately 10-20 feet from park level to the water. An abandoned railroad draw bridge is located at the northeasterly corner of the parcel.

Location Assessment

Bay Location. The site is located along the lower reach of the Seekonk River approximately 1.5 miles upstream of its confluence with the Providence River. Waters in the vicinity of this site do not meet aquatic life support criteria. Causes for water quality impairment include low oxygen concentration, excessive algal growth, presence of viral and bacterial pathogens, and nutrient enrichment. These waters are classified as SB1(a) and are likely impacted by pathogens from approved wastewater discharges and combined sewer overflows. These waters are also permanently closed to shellfishing (see Appendix B). From the Online Recreational Fishing Survey, typical catch within the Seekonk River consists almost exclusively of Striped Bass and Bluefish, both indicated as present spring through fall.



Water-based activities along this stretch of the Seekonk River consist of small-craft boating and rowing by the Brown University crew teams. The ample width of the river at this location is such that these uses would not conflict with shoreline recreational fishing.

Land Location. The site is located in a dense urban residential area mixed with light commercial uses along Gano Street. Gano Street itself is often subject to high traffic volumes as it serves an urban collector linking to and from Interstate Route 195 ramps near India Point. This proximity to I-195 and I-95 offers ease of access for a greater use base, though construction on both the Washington Bridge Replacement and I-195 Relocation Projects in this vicinity may hinder this accessibility for the immediate future (RIPTA bus service along Gano St. is currently limited to inbound-only).

Athletic fields within the site are used heavily by local sport leagues both on weekends and weeknights, and both soccer and softball fields are lighted. The limited amount of parking within the site is insufficient for demand during these periods of peak use; during such times excess vehicles often park illegally within the site or along nearby local streets.

The shoreline feature at this location is generally not conducive to fishing access, as the ground elevation drops steeply (approximately 10-20 feet) from the top of bank to the water (see Photos 7, 8). The moderately dense vegetation along the riverbank also presents difficulties with both access and line casting.

Environmental Constraints and Permitting. A vegetative buffer runs along the length of the parcel between the Seekonk River and athletic fields (see Photos 4, 6, 8). The inland edge of coastal feature is the top of bank, from which invasive species extend to the edge of water. Eel grass was not observed. This area of the Seekonk River classified by the CRMC as Type 4 (Multipurpose) waters and also regulated under the Providence River Special Area Management Plan.

Facilities Assessment

The Gano Street Recreation Area currently has little to offer in terms of public fishing accessibility. As previously noted, there is a lack of viable fishing spots within the site due to the steep-banked shoreline and vegetative buffer along the Seekonk River. Of the 387 responses to the Online Recreational Fishing Survey, only 1 participant reported fishing from the Gano Street facility. The site's on-site parking capacity (approximately 65 vehicles) is currently inadequate during peak use of the area, and there is limited additional area within the park to further develop additional parking or facilities. The exception is a small clearing at the end of the access road beyond the little league field (see Photo 6) which may be suitable for small-scale development. The abandoned railroad bridge is accessible via a path from this clearing, and though once gated off and closed to the public for safety concerns, this structure was readily accessible upon site visit (see Photo 5). It should be noted that this bridge is by no means a viable fishing structure due to the lack of railing, deteriorated condition of deck planks, etc.

Independent of fishing access, the general condition of the recreation area is fair: the site is relatively clean and pleasantly landscaped, however many of the facilities are in a poor condition (soccer and softball fields, concrete bleachers) due to overuse and lack of routine maintenance.

Existing Site Conditions

	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
<i>Existing Fishing Facilities</i>	X			
<i>Parking</i>		X		
<i>Compatibility with Surrounding Land / Water Uses</i>			X	
<i>Statewide Transportation Accessibility / Public Transit</i>			X	
<i>Site Aesthetics</i>		X		
	Low	Medium	High	
<i>Water Quality (see Appendix B)</i>	X			

Priority for Capital Improvements: Low

Several inherent difficulties in the Gano Street Recreation Area limit its viability for the development of improved public fishing access. There is very little surplus area within the site to develop the necessary additional parking, and viable water-level access would require some form of structure (possibly a stairway down the riverbank to a floating dock). Given the relatively poor quality of fishing offered by these waters and its lack of current fishing use, capital investment for the above would be difficult to justify. While the old railroad bridge may appear to offer an opportunity of rehabilitation and conversion for fishing use, this structure is in a highly dilapidated condition, having not been maintained for upwards of 25 years. Even if rehabilitation of the old railroad bridge was feasible, its high deck elevation (approximately 25 feet above water level) is not conducive to fishing use. Finally, given that several other existing elements of the site are in poor condition, it may not be prudent to implement fishing access improvements without first addressing those deficient facilities.



Photo 1. Entrance to Gano Street Recreation Area looking east.



Photo 2. Internal access roads within recreation area. The granite slabs have been placed to prohibit parking along the shoulder.



Photo 3. Parking lot and soccer field looking southeast.



Photo 4. Recreation Area and Seekonk River looking east from top of softball field bleachers.



Photo 5. Abandoned railroad drawbridge across Seekonk River.



Photo 6. Dirt path along top of bank leading to abandoned railroad bridge.



Photo 7. Typical shoreline access within recreation area. The steep banks and dense brush along the river are not conducive to fishing within the site.



Photo 8. Recreation area shoreline looking southwest from near abandoned railroad bridge.